



Diversity in languages and cultures is a valuable asset.

Have you ever taken a walk in the woods of one of the state or national forests in the North Carolina mountains? If so, have you noticed the tremendous diversity of plants, animals, and birds that you see and hear?

According to the National Park Service website, "Biological diversity is the hallmark of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which encompasses over 800 square miles in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. No other area of equal size in a temperate climate can match the park's amazing diversity of plants, animals, and invertebrates. Over 10,000 species have been documented in the park: Scientists believe an additional 90,000 species may live here.

Many people are concerned about climate change and its effect on ecosystems. Experience has shown us that the ecosystems that crash first are the ones where diversity is lacking. According to the Official North Carolina Travel Guide, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the most visited national park in the United States. The diversity of Western North Carolina is a beautiful thing that is cherished by many.

Many people believe that the cures for most or all human diseases can be found in the plants of the world, if we can determine which plants and find those cures before more species become extinct. That kind of biodiversity is a tremendous asset, and, in fact, many cures have been found in nature that have saved countless lives.

Diversity is the norm in nature, and diversity is to be valued, appreciated, and celebrated. This is no less true in our classrooms and our communities than in the natural outdoor settings of North Carolina.